



Chapter XXVI

**E-Business
Education for Everyone:
Developing and
Implementing
Breakthrough Strategies
(Or How Can IT Practitioners
and Educators Make Computer
Morons Surf and Steer on
E-Business Space)**

Rumel V. Atienza
De La Salle University, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Since its inception at the close of the past millennium, e-business has rapidly and continuously changed the conduct of business. However, the incoming generation of the Philippine workforce, particularly those who do not have sufficient exposure to computer technology and business, may not be able to cope, due to lack of academic preparation. Information technology practitioners and academicians can turn this threat into an opportunity by adopting a system of breakthrough practices in e-business education based on benchmarking studies in various universities in Asia and North America. The system proved to be highly effective, based on its pilot run.

INTRODUCTION

As the new millennium ushered in, the new global order of the Internet-kind unfolded and exponentially changed the way people live. One of life's facets that has been most affected by this new order is the conduct of business, where products are now sold and bought online within what is now called e-business (Turban et al., 2000).

But, developments in e-business and technology have been so mercurial, courtesy of the handful of e-business and computer demigods (Knight, 2002), that most mortals may soon find themselves inadequate or obsolete. Will such a nightmare be a reality? What can be done before it happens?

In this chapter, it is hoped that answers to these questions may be found by addressing the following research problems:

1. How academically prepared is the incoming workforce of the Philippines in facing the challenges of e-business? How prepared are they vis-à-vis their counterparts in North America?
2. What breakthrough strategies can IT practitioners and academicians implement to help them prepare?
3. How effective are these strategies?

FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Graduating students from the top four universities in the Philippines were surveyed in November 2000 to assess their e-business readiness.

To have a global benchmarking, graduating students from three universities in the United States, Canada, and the Philippines were surveyed in December 2000. These universities were chosen, because they were reputed to be among the pioneers in e-business education in their state or province. Furthermore, the two North American universities were also offering e-business courses to nonbusiness and noncomputer students, while the Philippine university was contemplating offering a similar course. E-commerce curricula of other universities, at least those that are published, often cater to computer or business students (Knight & Chan, 2002; Cohen, 2002). Subjects of the study were students enrolled in degree programs in engineering, science, education, or arts, that had less curricular exposure to e-business than students enrolled in computer or business-degree programs. They were assumed to be the ones that would be most likely left in the cold in e-business education.

The e-business programs for nonbusiness and noncomputer students of the three universities were reviewed, in order to develop a system of breakthrough practices that could be adopted in the Philippines. To determine the market feasibility of this system, a second survey among Philippine students was conducted. Using the survey results, a group of students brainstormed to enhance the system that would be jointly implemented by the industry and academe. This joint implementation was deemed necessary to bridge the gap between industry and academe (Knock, 2002).

To determine its effectiveness, the system was pilot-run in a Philippine university for one trimester, starting in June 2001, and the results were evaluated in September 2001.

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